

Empire State

ARCHITECT



NOVEMBER 1941

VOLUME I

NUMBER 6

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Editorial Board — Albert Clay, Louis Levine, James William Kideney.

Publisher — Julian L. Kahle, 232 Anderson Place, Buffalo, New York.

CIVILIAN PROTECTION

by Harry M. Prince

I started working on studies of defense almost two years ago—back in April, 1939—and I have been at it continuously. It was on July 12th of this past year, however, that the Mayor, who is National Director of the United States Office of Civilian Defense, named me as the architectural representative on an American Mission to England, consisting of 6 members, to study first-hand what had been accomplished, and how we Americans could benefit by their experience.

We sailed on July 12th by way of Clipper, stopping at Bermuda. From Bermuda our next stop was at Horta in the Azores. We found Horta to be somewhat antagonistic to Americans—not openly so—but you sensed and felt it. We were advised that this was brought about because of the fact that we had arrived shortly after some members of our Congress had advocated taking over the Azores by the United States.

Lisbon was the next stop. Now Lisbon today, I think, is probably the most interesting city in the whole world. Certainly, one would never suspect, on arrival in Lisbon, that a war was in progress. Money is very plentiful. Everybody seems to be active and busy, even the architects.

Architecturally, the City of Lisbon was an eye-opener to all of us. I saw some of the new buildings that have been erected in the last few years and I think that they are doing a beautiful job. There are magnificent examples of our modern architectural trend. Lisbon, of course, is flooded with refugees. We were told there were 40,000 people in Lisbon waiting to get out.

From Lisbon we flew by way of the British Overseas Airways in a Dutch plane. We were told that this plane was taken out of the Netherlands just before the invasion. It still had scars of that trip. There were many patched bullet holes. It is interesting to note that, as part of the camouflage, the Dutch crew who continue to operate the plane have printed a map of the Netherlands on one of the wings. The English state these Dutch crews are the finest flyers in the world. There were only four men operating the plane which ordinarily would take a crew of eight. They feel so keenly about what they are doing that position plays an unimportant role. The pilot takes his turn acting as Steward and the Steward acts as radio operator, and occasionally as pilot.

We landed at Bristol and were rushed from there to London. London became our headquarters and from there we toured England from one end to the other. As I said before, there were six of us in the Mission. There were two representing the Police, one being the Deputy Chief Inspector of the Police Department of the City of New York, and the other, Chief of the State Police of Michigan. Their assignment was police matters entirely, including communications, lighting, and various matters that ordinarily come under police jurisdiction.

Then, there was the Director of Public Works of the City of Pittsburgh, and the Secretary of the Department of Public Works of the City of Detroit, whose job it was to study matters relating to utilities, such as water supply, gas and electricity.

The Commissioner of Health of the City of Baltimore, was assigned to the study of hospitals, firstaid, health, and related problems.

My job, as architectural consultant, was to study shelters, the effect of bombs on buildings, defense housing, rest centers, and evacuation.

Our day began at 6:30. After breakfast we reported to a representative of the Office of Home Security, who arranged our schedule to visit parts of England for observation. When we arrived at a designated spot our party broke up and each went on his appointed task. Naturally, the work I was interested in led me to the office of the City Engineer, or the City Architect, or City Surveyor, or whatever his title might have been, to study the phases on which I was to report. This usually took most of the morning.

Then the Mission reassembled and went to the Lord Mayor's Office to receive official greetings and to be given a general picture of civilian defense in that city. Back again in the afternoon for more studies and finally returning to London about 8 o'clock for dinner. After dinner up to our rooms to write up our notes. This schedule you will notice left us no room for social life and we were too tired after a day's work to think very much about that.

In my official capacity, acting for the Office of Civilian Defense, I cannot tell you some of the things you would like to know; many of these things were given to us in strictest confidence and with the definite understanding that they were only to be given to the Civilian Defense Director for his use and guidance.

England, in the beginning, set up a Civilian Defense Committee which reported to certain Ministers. This was found not to work. What England finally did was to appoint a Minister called the Minister of Home Security. Originally Sir John Anderson—from whose name we get the designation of the "Anderson" shelter—was the first Minister of Home Security. In December, Sir John Anderson was relieved and in his place Mr. Herbert Morrison was appointed. All air raid precautions in England are directed and coordinated under his guidance. No military authority can give directions to Mr. Morrison. Mr. Morrison gives directions to the military and tells them what to do in relation to civilian defense. Of course this does not extend into the navy yards and military encampments, but outside of that the Minister of Home Security is supreme in all civilian defense matters.

That makes a very sensible and proper set-up in my opinion. All bulletins are issued only through the office of Home Security. The War Department does not issue any bulletins for public consumption. The plan used in England which was gained through hard, long experience is one from which I think we here can profit. Let the military do those things which properly belong to them. On the other hand, the Director of the United States Office of Civilian Defense should be in complete charge of the responsibilities of protection of civilian life.

Now, gentlemen, let us take a look into some of the things of particular interest to you as architects. There are now in England in the ARP services about 1,500,000 civilians. Only 500,000 of that group are paid employees. The other million or so are voluntary.

The architects, as always, were among the first to feel the effects of the war. There is no private building of any type now going on in England. Government agencies are doing what little work there is and these agencies have stretched out and taken into their fold all of these architectural men on whom they could lay their hands. Most of the members of the architectural profession, therefore, today are engaged in governmental work as paid employees.

The older men of the profession have found it very difficult to get along. Many are doing what is known as "First Aid Repairs". This means the repairing of buildings that have been blitzed or bombed. The government finances these repairs only to the extent that the buildings may be made habitable. A panel of architects has been selected. From this panel architects are given these little jobs to do. Beyond that there is very little private work.

I have given a fairly complete report on that situation to the Chairman of our local New York Chapter Committee, Mr. Harvey Stevenson, and to his associates. I feel that at a later date the local chapter will advise you, probably through the Institute or other sources, on their recommendations covering this situation. I advise you to read them carefully and give them serious study.

I can say to you without any breach of confidence that the destruction of buildings and other structures in England is serious. Blocks of buildings are down to the ground; debris is piled up in salvage piles. That destruction, I think, can never happen again to the extent it took place between September and December of 1940. Most of it took place during daylight raids when the Royal Air Force was not organized to the point that they are now. Today, daylight raids in England are rare. They haven't had a serious daylight raid in many, many months. Night raiding continues and night raiding is horrible for there is very little protection against night raids.

All of you gentlemen, I am sure, are familiar with the action of bombs and know how bombs function. You know about the high explosive 2,000 pound bomb and about the more generally used 500 pound bomb, and about the incendiary 2½ pound bomb that is dropped by the hundreds, so I do not need to go into their technical phases.

In addition to all of this the Nazis have introduced into this war something never known before — a "land mine", which is the same type of mine used in ship lanes, adapted for land use. It weighs about 2,000 pounds. Attached to this land mine is a parachute which has the effect of slowing it down and lessening the amount of penetration. When the land mine goes off it creates a concussion and suction far beyond the powers of explosive bombs.

Our Mission was advised, and we were able to verify this, that contrary to the general belief in this country, the great danger to human life is not from the direct explosive effects of these bombs. The great danger to human life is caused by fire, the indirect result of these bombs.

I would say that 70%, if not more, of all the damage to buildings existing in England today can be directly traced to the devastating effects of fire. High explosives disrupt water mains and other utilities. Gas mains are destroyed with the escaping gas adding to the fire hazard and contributing towards the spread of fire. The lack of water and low water pressure finishes the job.

I cannot give you the figures on casualties. However, the greater number of them was not caused by the direct action of bombs, but by shattering and splintering of materials and, even to greater extent, by the fragmentation of glass. It is a known fact that the great majority of those treated for injuries received their wounds above the waist.

Glass is without a doubt the second greatest hazard resulting from bombing; the first, as I have said, being fire. Let us take a quick look at the great danger of glass. People

are not ordered to remove the glass from buildings, but it is suggested that they do so. In the first floor of practically all buildings in London, Plymouth, Liverpool, and other large cities, owners and tenants have not only removed the glass, but closed up openings solidly with reinforced bricks. In addition, baffle walls of masonry are built directly in front of the windows and exterior doors.

One of the most successful methods of glass protection is the following, which prevents the shattering of glass. The window glass is covered with some tacky material, such as varnish, and then over the varnish a thin ordinary curtain of net material is placed and then the curtain surface is revarnished. Ordinary chicken wire mesh placed in a wooden frame is then set about an inch away from the surface. This method prevents the shattering of the glass quite well. Heavy portieres add to the protection. But the real solution seems to be the closing up of the window openings entirely. Of course, you then have the problem of artificial ventilation and light.

After glass is once blown out it is never replaced. There are two reasons for that:—first, it is silly to put back the very thing that causes damage; and, second, there is the scarcity of material. They have a number of substitutes for glass. Some are now being manufactured in this country. About this I am sure you will be told in one of the bulletins which will be issued by the Government later.

Of all the shelters that have been designed for outside use it is conceded that the simple corrugated iron shelter known as the "Anderson" shelter has stood up the best.

Now, as to the effect of bombs on buildings, fireproof, steel frame buildings with fireproof arches will stand anything but a direct hit. They are the only fairly safe, bomb-resistant buildings in England. In the ordinary steel frame construction with concrete slabs, except for the action of a high explosive bomb, or a direct hit with a 2,000 pound bomb, any floor below the three top floors is considered safe enough not to require additional protection.

Concrete frame does not stand up as well as steel. Concrete structures, of the monolithic type particularly, due to their rigidity of construction, have been known to break in sections; girders have been sheared off completely from the column and have caused great damage, but they are excellent protection against fire damage.

In my opinion, no building except a steel frame building or concrete monolithic type frame structure, even with its defects, can be depended upon in any form to withstand the effect of a high explosive bomb. A wall-bearing building will not stand up. It will completely collapse if the bomb is close enough. A frame building in any form is an invitation to the Hereafter unless some other protection is provided.

May I restate, too, that I think a Technical Committee should be appointed under the complete control of the United States Director of Civilian Defense. Civilian defense, I repeat, is a civilian matter and not a military problem. Civilian defense, in order to produce the magnificent morale that they have in England—that spirit which refuses to say or even admit for a moment that they will ever be beaten—must be organized and should be organized by civilians. I am sure that in the event of war we Americans, men and women, particularly the women, will do as well as they are doing in England.

A NATIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY IS ESSENTIAL*

INTERIM REPORT OF THE R.I.B.A. RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE, PLANNING AND AMENITIES GROUP

1. Present Planning Authorities

Under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, the statutory planning authorities are the local councils, borough, urban or rural. Many of these have voluntarily grouped themselves for planning purposes into regional areas of limited extent. In some instances they have delegated their powers to a county authority, but unless powers are so delegated the county council, outside London, is not a statutory planning authority. In the County of London, however, the L.C.C. and the City of London Corporation are the planning authorities for their respective areas.

Under the restriction of Ribbon Development Act, 1935, highway authorities are given control over any development within 220 feet of the centre of all classified roads and over any access to such roads. Certain other roads, in respect of which an order has been made, are also controlled. Again under the Trunk Roads Act, 1936, the Ministry of Transport exercises similar powers over defined trunk roads.

There is, therefore, divided jurisdiction for various planning purposes, and this has led to great confusion in the past. The various authorities concerned have tended to act from purely departmental motives and thus to be at cross-purposes on the site.

2. Present Exemptions from Planning

All Government departments are at present exempt from planning control, and many statutory undertakings, such as railways, docks, electricity undertakings and gas companies, are also exempt to a large extent. Such exemptions are bound to upset any attempt at balanced planning.

3. A Constructive Plan Necessary on a National Basis

The Government has accepted in principle the necessity for a national plan to cover the whole country with regional divisions, and it is clear that any plan for post-war operation must be mainly constructive in character, rather than restrictive. It must include all forms of activity and not be limited by local administrative boundaries and, in its main lines, it must be ready for operation as soon as possible, and in any case immediately the end of hostilities is in sight.

4. Essential Machinery for a National Plan

A. There must be *one* national authority responsible for all planning matters, which shall include the following:—

i. Ordnance survey, at present under the Ministry of Agriculture. The urgent need for maps kept constantly up to date cannot be over-emphasised. The possibility of a new scale of about 3 ins. to the mile should be considered for the purpose of a national plan. If fully contoured it would greatly assist the consideration of all proposals.

ii. Present planning department of the Ministry of Health whose officers are in constant touch with local planning authorities.

(It is not considered desirable to include the detailed work of housing.)

iii. Trunk roads and new roads, at present dealt with by the Ministry of Transport.

Railways, ports, canals and public utilities.

iv. Essential agricultural reservations, national and regional open spaces, approval and reservation of aerodrome sites.

B. There must be *regional offices* of the authority (not necessarily those adopted for the purposes of Civil Defence) to deal promptly with all the above matters on lines laid down by the central authority.

C. There must be *regional grouping* of local authorities who will decide as to suitable local planning areas and any necessary financial adjustments.

THE SCOPE OF A NATIONAL PLAN

The experts responsible for the preparation of a national plan will be concerned, among other matters, with the following:—

1. Decentralisation of Industry

The recent report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Industrial Population makes drastic recommendations, all of which require to be carefully considered as part of the future national policy. The location of industry has a vital bearing on the whole question of planning.

Consideration will have to be given to the future utilisation of wartime buildings and development in this connection.

2. Reducing Vulnerability

The Civil Defence Act, 1939, gives power to planning authorities to make requirements with a view to rendering an area less vulnerable to air attack. Such powers may well be used to assist in securing lower densities of development and open belts between industrial and other areas, and even between parts of a town.

3. Control of Design

Insufficient use appears to have been made of the present powers contained in sec. 12 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, to control the "size, height, design and external appearance of buildings." Insistence on the employment of a suitable architect in every case is the obvious remedy.

4. No exemptions

It may well be questioned whether agricultural buildings are rightly exempted from the above section. In any case it is clear that in a national plan there should be no exemptions for Government departments or statutory undertakings and that all works and buildings shall be controlled by the national plan.

The nation should lead the way in good citizenship.

5. Taking Stock of National Assets

There is urgent need for research into the natural resources of the country. The fullest utilisation of existing assets involves among other things, an independent overhaul of all statutory undertakings and public utilities, such as railways, canals, docks, barrages, water power, water supply, drainage, electricity, power and gas supply, and constructive proposals affecting these.

6. New Possibilities

From the data made available by such a survey the possibilities of new services which might be developed should be considered.

Services which immediately occur for investigation are:—

- i. Hot water and heat distribution on an area basis.
- ii. The saving of waste and salvage of useful material.
- iii. The utilisation of spoil heaps.
- iv. Disposal of refuse matter on a mechanical basis.
- v. The avoidance of atmospheric pollution.

7. Land Reservations

Essential agricultural land must be reserved, and there must also be forestry reservations and preservations and planting of trees and woodlands, national parks, open spaces, camping sites. Coastal reservations and recreation facilities must also be considered in the national plan.

8. Essentials for Living Whether in Town or Country

"A city is a place where people live together a common life for a noble purpose."—ARISTOTLE.

Health and contentment for its people should be the main aim of every community. To achieve this we need certain standards of open space, hygiene, transport and convenience, general welfare and recreation for body and mind, and appropriate standards will have to be decided.

The Urban Problem resolves itself into:—

- i. The reconstruction of existing towns.
- ii. The extension of existing towns.
- iii. The re-siting of existing towns.
- iv. The provision of suitable new towns.

All of which must form part of the national plan and will have to be carefully investigated.

The Rural Problem resolves itself into:—

- i. The provision of healthy villages and
- ii. Reasonable facilities for community life.

9. Contributing and Limiting Factors in All Communities

Attempts to limit the size of towns have been made at many periods in history. For instance, Queen Elizabeth forbade building within three miles of London or Westminster, and the Commonwealth Parliament, in 1656, increased this to 10 miles, except on old foundations. In Australia and New Zealand, the new towns of a hundred years ago were often surrounded with a belt of park lands. None of these efforts can be regarded as achieving the results desired. It may be that the only satisfactory answer to such failures is that the whole of the land should be in one ownership, but even apart from this possibility, much can be achieved by a definite national plan.

* This article is reprinted from the Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It seemed to read like a report of planning in New York State with only a few changes. For some months your president has been the grateful recipient of the Journal on an exchange basis with the E. S. A.

There must be a definite reason for every new town. In most cases it will be better to select an existing centre, however small which has a tradition and life of its own. A dormitory town is an anomaly.

Constructive guidance, rather than restrictive control, should be the object of planning. The only way to stop industries, and consequently population, from settling in one place is to make it more profitable for them to settle in another.

10. Rates and Rating

The present unequal incidence of rating is one which tells very heavily against certain communities. The de-rating of agriculture and the partial de-rating of industry, with corresponding block grants from national funds, has been a temporary expedient which will require reconsideration, but in any case a new form of finance on a national or regional basis is clearly called for.

11. Local Improvement Fund—Developers' Contribution

Too often in the past when rapid development has come in a particular district, it has meant a large increase in expenditure by the local authority in the provision of necessary open spaces and essential road widenings and public services. It is possible that every developer should be required as a condition of approval, to set aside, say, one-fifth or some other proportion of his land or its value at the option of the authority, towards the open spaces and improvement of the district. A developer of 100 acres would thus provide 20 acres of open space, or its value, and even an individual house on a £100 plot would contribute £20 towards the improvement of the district. Open spaces and widenings would thus be automatically provided as and when they were needed.

12. Private and Public Roads

The scales are at present heavily weighted in favour of building on existing road frontages and this is reflected in the price of such as building land, as compared with back land the development of which will necessitate the construction of an expensive "private street." Standards of road making and comparative costs, and other road questions should be investigated with a view to a recommendation under this head.

13. Public Ownership of Land

Much has been written as to the possibility of the nationalisation of land, in whole or in part. Attention should be drawn to a report prepared by a special Committee of the Royal Institute of British Architects on Compensation and Betterment, which indicates a possible method of dealing with a very difficult question, which will at the same time be fair to owners and retain the essential of private initiative.

14. Legislation

Changes in legislation will become necessary as the results of investigation become apparent.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Pursuant to a resolution adopted, the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the New York State Association of Architects will be held in New York City in the Architectural League on the 9th day of December, 1941. The meeting will convene promptly at 10:00 o'clock and will be in session until the completion of all business which may properly come before the meeting. The Board will be the guests of the New York Society of Architects at its Annual Dinner that evening in the League and will at that time present to Senator Joseph J. Dunnigan a resolution expressing the Association's appreciation of the Senator's efforts in behalf of the profession.

All Directors and their alternates are urgently requested to be present at this meeting. The Chairmen of all Committees are urged to be present and to make their reports in person. Those who are unable to attend are requested to submit their written reports to the Secretary on or before the date of the meeting. Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution, the officers will be authorized to pay the traveling expenses of the directors only.

MICHIGAN REGISTRATION ACT REVISED

Changes in the Registration Acts of all states are of interest to New York State architects. From a study of these amendments we can see wherein our own law may be made more effective. From the Michigan Society Bulletin we reprint the report of Michigan's latest amendment.

"House Enrolled Act No. 180, an amendment to Act No. 240, Public Acts of 1937, it is understood, will take effect ninety days after adjournment of the Legislature, or on January 10, 1942.

The effects of the amendments are two-fold; first to restrict the title, 'architect' or 'engineer' to those registered as such and second, to prohibit an architect from having a prejudicial interest in a project.

The passages that differ from the present act are as follows:

"No person shall publicly use the term 'architect,' 'professional engineer' or 'land surveyor' in connection with his name unless such person is registered under the terms of this act.

"No registered architect shall be engaged or interested in the sale of building materials or have any interest in any project or structure, prejudicial to his professional interest therein."

Kenneth C. Black, past-president of the Michigan Society reports on the aims and objectives of the amendment as follows:—

"I might say that the reason for securing the latest amendments to our registration law was that the wording of the original law was ambiguous in the sections which were amended. Because of the phraseology of the original law, we were informed by legal counsel that a man was not practicing architecture unless he had a prejudicial interest in the project, which meant that it was absolutely impossible to prosecute contracting firms or material dealers who were engaged in furnishing architectural plans. The new amendments were such that we hope they will allow architects the widest possible latitude in the practice of their profession and will, at the same time, prevent contracting firms from

practicing architecture. We think this result will be obtained by an interpretation of the phrase "prejudicial to his professional interests" as it is used in the amendments, a copy of which "Tal" apparently sent you. Under this clause, if an architect used materials, fixtures, or fittings of his own design (possibly of his own manufacture), in the building (such as is frequently done by Alden Dow, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Eliel Saarinen), and a complaint was made that they were selling material or acting as a contractor in the erection of their building, it would be necessary for the complainant to prove that the extent of the material used or the extent of their activity as a contractor was such, that it was prejudicial to their professional interest as architect of the project. You can easily see that it would be extremely difficult to prove any such charge.

In the case of firms like the Austin Company and other contracting organizations operating in Michigan, however, where the furnishing of architectural services is only incidental to the main business of the firm, it should be fairly easy to prove a prejudicial interest insofar as their activities in the practice of architecture are concerned, and the State Registration Board is preparing test cases at the present time which we intend to bring into court in an effort to establish this interpretation. Time alone will tell whether or not we are successful, but I hope this explanation will make what we have in mind clear to you.

With respect to your question as to the methods used in getting these amendments through the legislature, I can only say that due to connections of mine as a member of the Michigan Planning Commission, we were able to have the amendments sponsored by the majority floor leaders in both houses of the legislature, and the amendments were put through as simply routine legislation without any fanfare and with hearings in the House and Senate which were attended by myself and one other architect".

AFFILIATION AND UNIFICATION

On several occasions the question has been raised as to what benefits we have derived since becoming a state member of the American Institute of Architects. The answer is difficult, just as difficult as answering the question, "Why go to church?". Few would admit any tangible gain from church attendance, until, as church members, they have themselves put something into the work of the church.

It is then rather a question of ideas, and of ideals. Firstly we have combined with the other twenty-one state societies in the country, without any sacrifice of our independence, for our mutual benefit. Secondly, we have, by becoming a state member, joined with other architects throughout the country in the support of the profession nationally, in the only way possible.

Most of the interrogators really mean, "What has the Institute done for me?". Well, currently, one thing is the engagement of the full time of a man to represent the profession in Washington, to interpret priority rulings, to try for a more liberal attitude toward private building, and generally to work for the interests of the profession. These things are not of the primary concern of the large firms; priorities for one, will affect the little fellow a lot more than the upper crust.

Then there is the matter of standards of professional practice. Both members and non-members of the Institute at times transgress recognized sound professional standards. Surely the situation can be improved if we all support the only nation-wide effort being made and ourselves contribute to the maintenance of high ethical standards.

The influence of the State members in the Institute has become great. Before each convention there is a conference of state association delegates, not limited to Institute business. As pointed out to you last May, twenty percent of the voting strength at these meetings is vested in the delegates of the New York State Association of Architects.

Unification is not complete with the acceptance of all of the State Societies as State members. It is only begun. How long completion of the program will take, or what course, is difficult to predict. It is in a state of flux, as evidenced by the many proposals regularly advanced. If ever changes cease to be urged, perhaps it will indicate that we have stopped thinking.

Regional Director Clement R. Newkirk comments, "At the last meeting of the Institute Board it was voted the sense of the meeting that the Institutes should broaden its base of membership to make that membership more representative of the profession. There are two immediate ways of doing this: (1) through the enlargement of the corporate membership of the Institute itself and (2) through the State Associations. The Institute can not represent the State Associations within the states as well as the State Associations can, through the Institute, speak nationally. It is my personal belief that the whole question of the make-up of the Institute membership is, as you say, in a state of flux, and I am convinced that eventually, and I hope not too far distant, the whole composition of the Institute membership will be changed so that it will be a greatly enlarged body. I think that we still do and always will need State Associations for their potent influence in state matters."

The next Institute Convention will be held in Detroit in June. If you want to see whether these state members are exerting any influence in the Institute, in the national picture, attend. Try if possible to be present for the conference of State Associations as well as for the Institute sessions. As far as New York State is concerned, you will find your association most active, as all who are acquainted with Matthew W. DelGaudio will expect, knowing he is the member of the Board of Directors of the Institute representing the State Members.

State Association Members of The American Institute of Architects As of August 1941

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